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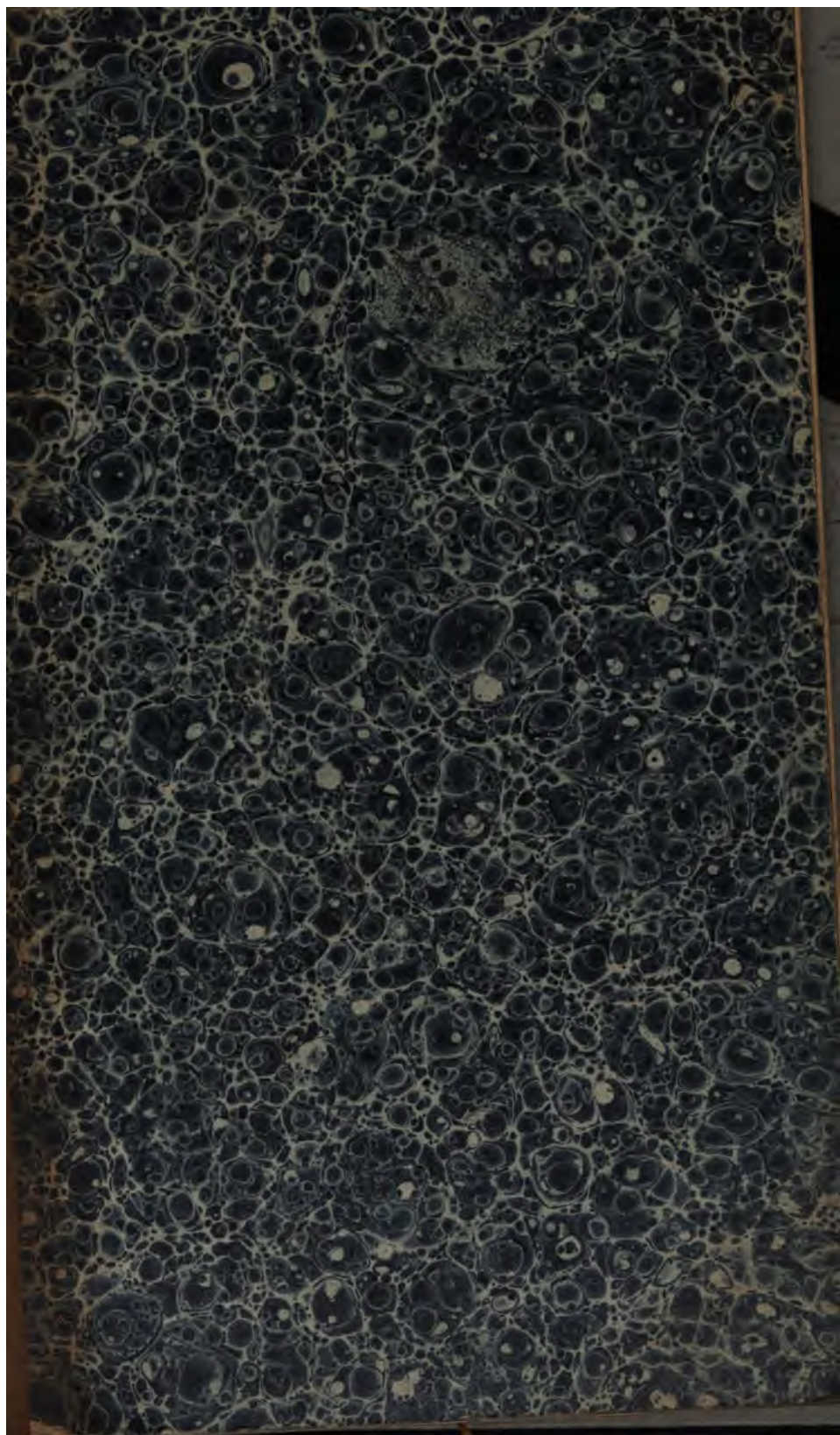
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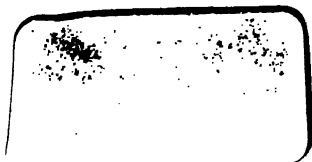


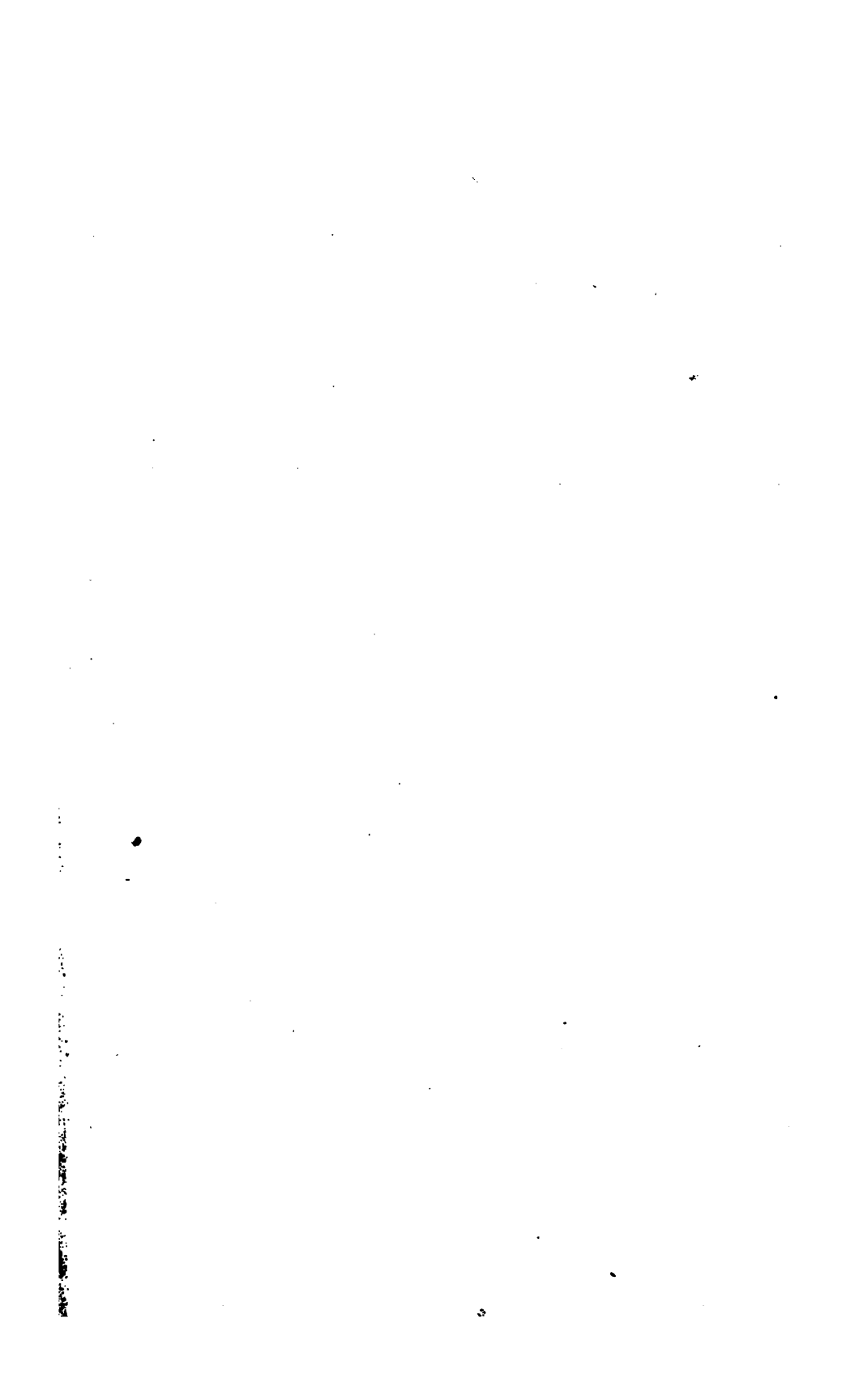
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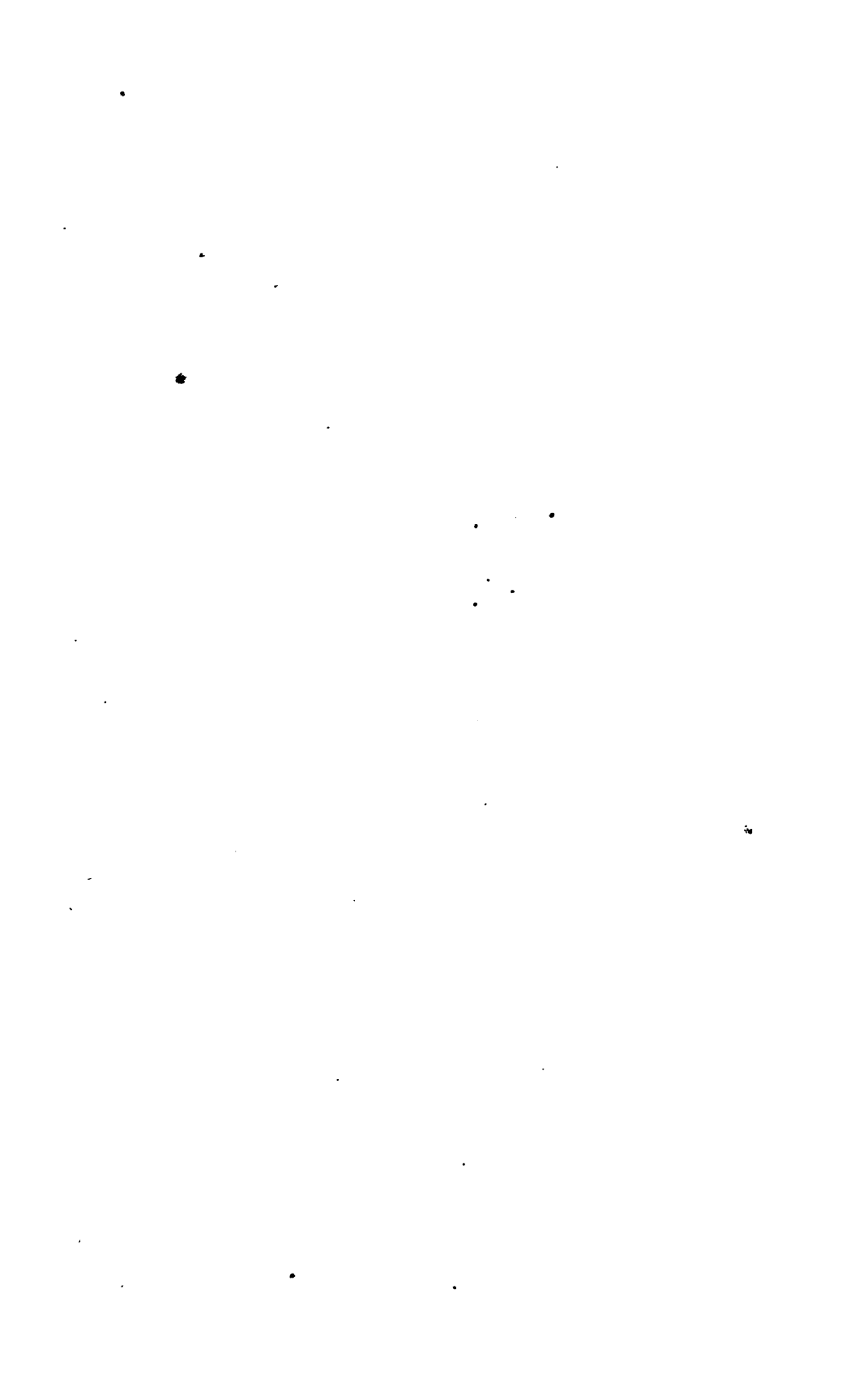
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ORTHODOX PREACHING

(IN CONTRADISTINCTION SO CALLED)

DEFENDED

AGAINST MODERN OBJECTIONS

AND

MISREPRESENTATIONS.

BY A LAYMAN.



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ABOUT three weeks after the publication of my former pamphlet (*Remarks on Evangelical Preaching—exclusively so called*), I was, for the first time, made acquainted with the fact of Mr. Melvill's having renounced, since 1832, the peculiar tenets of the pseudo-Evangelical School; and a passage which was pointed out to me in a volume of his sermons published a few years ago, removes all possible doubt of his having really done so. I have, therefore, much pleasure in now giving to this passage the same publicity which I before gave to the former tenets of the above highly popular preacher.

THE AUTHOR.

ORTHODOX PREACHING.

At a time like the present, when our Church is so zealously assailed by the agents of blasphemy, infidelity, and Popery, on the one side, and of schismatical dissent on the other, it is deeply to be regretted that there should still continue to exist within her bosom the two opposite parties usually styled "ORTHODOX" and "EVANGELICAL," between whom a harmony of opinion seems impossible to be effected. Occasionally, indeed, the peculiar differences of these two parties may appear to be lost sight of, in their united zeal to repel a common enemy; but no sooner has the enemy been driven back, than these differences again start into notice, bringing with them a revival of those feelings which for a time had seemed extinguished.

Of these differences, that relating to baptismal regeneration has excited by far the greatest share of interest, and may undoubtedly be considered as the chief; since, if the two parties can only be brought to an agreement on this subject, it is evident that all other important differences must necessarily disappear. Let both parties but agree on the completeness of the analogy between the case (instanced in 1 Cor. x.) of the Israelites travelling, under Divine guidance, through the wilderness to the earthly Canaan, and that of regularly baptized Christians travelling, under the guidance of God's Spirit, through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan, and we shall then have a settlement of the question relating to the possibility of departing totally and finally from grace. For as the Israelites, by provoking God, subjected themselves not

merely to repeated chastisements, but at length to excision in the wilderness, and thus failed to reach the earthly Canaan; so may Christians, by similar misconduct, fail finally to reach the heavenly Canaan. The view which the "Orthodox" party take of baptismal regeneration perfectly harmonizes with the above analogy: I shall therefore endeavour, in the first place, clearly to explain the view taken by this party; and then proceed to a defence of it against modern objections and misrepresentations.

"The determinate sense of the word 'regeneration' (observes Bishop Van Mildert) depends upon the subject to which it relates. Abstractedly, it denotes an entrance upon any new state of being; a state essentially different from that in which existence had already taken place. Thence it is taken to denote anything new in the mode or condition of being. But what that newly modified state or condition may be, can only be ascertained by reference to the subject and the purpose to which the term is applied. Here the aid of verbal analogy is called for. In the Scriptures, terms of similar import with 'regeneration,' such as 'new birth,' a 'new creature,' 'born again,' and 'created anew,' are frequently used. These are to be compared with each other, and with the several contexts of the passages where they occur, in order to discover the signification ordinarily attached to them by the author. And when we find that they are almost invariably employed to distinguish the state of a person admitted into the Christian covenant, from that of one who is not so admitted, we shall beware of adopting any interpretation irrelevant to that view of the subject. We shall perceive, that the word 'regeneration,' in the Scriptural usage of it, means only our initiation, or entrance, by baptism, into that covenant, which gives us new privileges, new hopes, and a new principle of spiritual life; translating us from our natural state in Adam, to a spiritual state in Christ. The expression, therefore, cannot, without a direct violation of the ver-

bal analogy of Scripture, be applied to any operation that takes place subsequent to that baptismal change with which alone it perfectly corresponds. In like manner, historical analogy may be applied to this particular point, strongly confirming the evidence adduced from verbal analogy. Had the sacred writers used the term 'regeneration,' and the expressions synonymous with it, in a sense not only peculiar to themselves, but dissimilar to any in which they had before been used, still, having expressed themselves so clearly upon the subject to which the terms are applied, there could be little difficulty in determining the acceptation in which these terms ought to be taken. But we have further evidence than this. Our Lord, in discoursing with Nicodemus on the necessity of being 'born again,' reproves this 'master of Israel' for not already 'knowing these things:' that is, for not readily perceiving the force and propriety of a figure of speech which ought to have been familiar to a Jewish teacher. And that this reproof was justly merited, we collect from the best writers on Jewish antiquities; from whom it appears, that terms of similar import were in frequent use among the Jews, to describe those Gentiles who had been converted from heathenism, and admitted into the Jewish Church."

"Because (remarks Bishop Gleig) it was said to the children of Israel, immediately before their departure from Egypt, 'When a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land;' such proselytes were considered as made in reality children of Abraham by some mystical or new birth. Some time, however, before the advent of the Messiah, baptism, as well as circumcision, appears to have been deemed necessary to accomplish that regeneration; and by these two rites it was so completely accomplished, that a heathen, when thus admitted as a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and a slave, when emancipated by

his master, was each considered as a new-born Jewish child, insomuch that his former relations, when a heathen or a slave, were no longer considered as related to him at all. Such firm possession had this strange notion got of their minds, that Maimonides (as quoted by Lightfoot) informs us, that a heathen might lawfully marry his own mother, or his maternal sister, when they had both become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and thereby were literally made new creatures. Lightfoot has given us the whole process of Jewish baptism; and the questions which he says were put to the heathen candidates for that baptism, appear to have, on the whole, been very proper, and analogous to those which were afterwards put by the Christian clergy to the adult candidates for Christian baptism. If all this be duly considered, I think there will be no doubt but that it was from the Hebrew Scriptures, and the common language of the Jewish doctors, that the Apostles and Evangelists, and even Christ Jesus himself, learned to call admission into the Church by baptism, 'regeneration,' or 'a new birth.'

Such, then, is the origin and Scriptural meaning of the term 'regeneration;' and that such is also the meaning attached to it by our Church, is evident from her catechism, which teaches us, that the "inward and spiritual grace" received at baptism, is "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," whereby, from "being by nature born in sin and children of wrath," we are made "children of grace." Baptism we are thus taught to consider as conveying regeneration, whereby we are admitted to the privileges of the Christian covenant, and have an assurance of the grant of all spiritual aid necessary to enable us to perform its conditions.

"It is (continues Bishop Van Mildert) by entitling him to these benefits, that it makes the partaker 'a new creature,' 'born of God,' and 'an heir of eternal life.' Thenceforth he continues to be in a state of salvation, or salvable state, notwithstanding the errors and defec-

tions to which he is liable. He ' may depart from grace given, and fall into sin ; and, by the grace of God, may rise again and amend his life.' He may entirely forfeit his hopes and privileges by impenitency or unbelief ; or he may recover them by repentance and renewal of faith. His spiritual birth, his regeneration, is the beginning of his Christian life : his growth in grace, and his perseverance to the end, will be the result of a right use of those further supplies from above, which minister to his spiritual support and nourishment, and to which this first admission into the covenant gives him a title and a claim."

"This new birth, this regeneration (remarks Dr. Waterland), can be but once in a Christian's whole life, as baptism can be but once ; and as there can be no second baptism, so there can be no second new birth. Regeneration, with respect to the regenerating agent, means the first admission ; and with respect to the recipient, it means the first entrance into the spiritual or Christian life ; and there cannot be two first entrances or first admissions, any more than two spiritual lives or two baptisms. The analogy which this new spiritual life bears to the natural, demonstrates the same thing." For as natural life once received is no more given, no more begun, but is repaired, renewed, nourished, kept up, preserved ; so spiritual life is but once given, and is nourished and preserved by those further supplies of heavenly grace flowing from a worthy participation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning adult baptism, no difference of opinion exists in our Church ; both parties (Orthodox and Evangelical) allowing that baptism conveys no spiritual blessings to adults without repentance and faith. Not so, however, with respect to infant baptism ; for here great difference of opinion exists. Now, while some contend that regeneration denotes an instantaneous, perceptible, and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit, which takes place at some period subsequent to

baptism ; others, that the elect only are regenerated ; others, that regeneration (which they confound with renovation or growth in grace) denotes a continued and progressive work of the Spirit ; others, that there exists a distinction between baptismal and spiritual regeneration ; others, that the regeneration of infants at baptism depends on the repentance and faith of the parents and sponsors ; and others, that the regeneration of infants is merely a charitable supposition ; we of the Orthodox party (who suffer not ourselves to be perplexed with any of the monstrosities of Calvinism) believe, that to infants (who are incapable of repentance and faith, but may be grafted into the Church, adopted by God, and have a remission of the penalties inflicted on the human race), baptism always conveys regeneration ; and that it does so by virtue of Christ's institution and promise, and independently of the repentance and faith of the sponsors or parents.

And that this view of the subject agrees with that of our Church, may be seen by inspecting her service for baptism in private, where there are no sponsors ; the infant being there regarded as much a partaker of the benefits of baptism, as in the administration of that sacrament where the promises of repentance and faith are made in the child's name by its sponsors. Regeneration, however, though always spiritually conferred in baptism, denotes merely an incipient state, not one that is complete ; the period of birth, not the period of full age : and though there can never be a repetition of it, there may yet be a forfeiture of all its benefits. All baptized persons, therefore, though undoubtedly regenerated, need constantly to be reminded of the very serious obligations they are under to continue endeavouring, by further supplies of God's grace, to perfect or to renew their repentance, their faith, and their obedience, in order to the nourishment and preservation of their spiritual life ; lest, by not fulfilling the conditions of the covenant they have entered into, they fail to obtain its final rewards.

Of the objectors to the above view, the first I shall notice is the modern author of the work "Essays on the Church," which has lately appeared as one of the series of publications, called "The Christian's Family Library." This writer denies that regeneration (the reception of which he sometimes confounds with the improvement of it) is always conveyed to infants by baptism; making it depend upon the faith of the parents and sponsors: and, in order to reconcile his view with that of our Church, he takes for granted, that the expressions in her Articles, "such only as worthily," and "such as by faith, and rightly" do receive the sacraments, are meant to apply not merely to adults, but even to infants also; so that infants become unworthy receivers of baptism, and, therefore, instead of deriving any benefit from it, only "purchase to themselves damnation," whenever faith is wanting in the parties concerned. The following is a specimen of this author's reasoning.

He ends a long quotation from the Calvinistic Archbishop Usher (whom, together with the equally Calvinistic Archbishop Whitgift, he is particularly anxious to make the oracle of our Church) with the question, "Doth the inward grace always attend upon the outward sign?" The following he gives as the Archbishop's answer:—

"Surely, no: the sacrament of baptism is effectual in infants, only to those, or to all those, that belong to the election of grace. Which thing though we (in the judgment of charity) do judge of every particular infant, yet we have no ground to judge so of all in general: or if we should judge so, yet it is not any judgment of certainty; we may be mistaken."

He next alludes to the before-mentioned expressions of our Articles, interpreting them so as to suit his view: and he then quotes the following remark of Dr. Pusey, which he represents as savouring of Popery:—

"Baptism is considered to be 'rightly received,' when there is no positive obstacle or hindrance to the

reception in the recipient; such as impenitence or unbelief would be in the case of an adult: so that infants are necessarily right recipients of it, as not being capable of actual sin."

What there is of Popery in this remark, is more than I can discover; though few, I think, can doubt that our essayist's views savour strongly of Calvinism. On the above remark of the doctor, he thus writes:—

"Let the subtilty be observed with which this writer (Dr. Pusey) passes over the expression of the Article, 'worthily receive the same;' and the explanation, 'by faith, and rightly do receive them;' and drops down first to the mere technical expression, 'a right reception,' and then to an assumption, that this right reception means simply the absence of all 'positive obstacle or hindrance.'—The doctrine of the Church is far different. She demands 'a worthy reception;' not by any human or innate worthiness, but by 'faith' implanted by the Divine Spirit in the heart. If the baptism of the Church be invoked and received in faith, she doubts not the performance of the promise; but if no faith is exercised in the whole transaction, she declares the sacrament to have been profaned, the reception to have been an unworthy one, and the result to be condemnation."

He afterwards argues, that every child to whom regeneration has been conveyed by baptism must necessarily, immediately on coming to age, begin to shew the fruits of it; and that no regeneration can have taken place where such proof is wanting. Alluding to Dr. Pusey's view, he thus writes:—

"Hence it follows, that as baptism, even among the poorer classes, has not, to any great extent, been neglected, we are taught to look upon the bulk of our population as having been actually made 'new creatures.' At all events, we might go into one of our great theatres, filled chiefly with the middle and upper classes; and while we beheld thousands revelling in profaneness and impurity, we should still have to say,

upon Dr. Pusey's system, 'These have all been regenerated; have all become partakers of a new nature; have all been adopted into Christ's family, and reconciled to God.' Is it not obvious that this scheme literally makes nothing of 'regeneration' and 'a new nature?' Might not a neophyte reasonably rejoin: 'If this be all that is meant by what you call regeneration—if this is the new nature you profess to obtain by baptism, and if baptism itself produces no other fruit than this, I really do not comprehend its value or utility?' "

By arguing thus, however, he evidently confounds regeneration with the subsequent improvement of it, and forgets that God's Spirit may long strive with a person before finally giving him over to a reprobate mind. With regard to the expressions in the Articles, to which he attaches so much weight, I have no hesitation in affirming that they refer to adults merely, and not to infants; for had they been intended to have a reference to the latter, the expression, "get purchased for them," would have been more correct and natural than the one used, "purchase to themselves." But the concluding words of our twenty-fifth Article seem to me to remove all doubt on the subject; for, after the words "they that receive them (the sacraments) unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation," we read, "as St. Paul saith." The natural inference from this addition seems to be, that our Articles were intended to have reference to the same sort of persons that the Apostle referred to. To whom, then, did St. Paul refer? Clearly to adults receiving unworthily the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: and hence we may reasonably conclude that our Church, in her Articles, also intended to refer to adults. In answer to the assertion, that the beneficial operation of infant baptism depends upon the faith of the sponsors, the Rev. T. M. Fallow, in his recent work, "The Baptismal Offices Explained," thus writes:—

"The opinion, that the benefits of infant baptism depend upon the repentance and faith of the sponsors,

is not only at variance with the service in question, but the supposition also on which the opinion rests—that infants are baptized on the repentance and faith of their sponsors—is equally so. The vows and promises made at the baptism of infants are not the vows of their sponsors, but of the children in whose name they are made. As the benefits of Christ's redemption cannot be fully enjoyed without repentance and faith in those who have arrived at years of discretion, the conveyance of those benefits to infants by the sacrament of baptism brings with it an obligation to repentance and faith, whenever they attain those years. And the vows being made by sponsors in their name at baptism, is nothing but a solemn mode of recognizing their obligations."

And the same author gives the following reply of the bishops to the non-conformist divines at the Savoy Conference, which, he says, may be regarded as a summary of the view of the Church on this subject:—

"The effect of children's baptism depends neither upon their own present actual faith and repentance, which the catechism saith expressly they cannot perform; nor upon the faith and repentance of their natural parents or pro-parents, or of their godfathers or godmothers; but upon the ordinance and institution of Christ: but it is requisite that when they come to age they should perform these conditions of faith and repentance for which also their godfathers and godmothers charitably undertook on their behalf. And what they do for the infant in this case, the infant himself is truly said to do: as in the courts of this kingdom daily the infant does answer by his guardian, and it is usual to do homage by proxy, and for princes to marry by proxy."

And now, before taking leave of our essayist, I would ask, does he or does he not believe that the inward and spiritual grace of baptism is always such as will, on the child's coming to age, prove an overpowering and constraining grace, necessarily leading to the immediate

production of such fruits as will never fail to afford a manifest demonstration of what was the state of mind of the parents and sponsors at the period of the child's receiving the sacrament? If he does not entertain any such groundless belief, then I must beg leave to tell him that his doctrine stands exposed to the same sort of charge as is advanced against the Popish doctrine, which makes the benefits of the sacraments to depend upon the worthiness and intention of the priest; for, according to either doctrine, no one, however apparently he may have been baptized in infancy, can ever know for certain whether he has been really baptized or not; and the consequence will be, that a lie may be put by our Church into the mouth of the young Christian, when he is made to answer, "I was made (at my baptism) a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

The next objector whom I shall notice is the Rev. Legh Richmond, whose memoirs have been written by a clergyman approving of his views, and also form one of the before-mentioned "Family Library." The writer of these memoirs, after reflecting upon the late truly pious and learned Archdeacon Daubeny for considering baptismal and spiritual regeneration as contemporaneous and inseparable, gives the following remarks of Mr. Richmond on the subject:—

"As to the expressions which Mr. Daubeny brings forward, as proofs that the Church considers baptism and regeneration to be synonymous, we would observe, that the Church is usually made to speak in the name and in the character of that part of it which truly believes and partakes of her saving privileges; and when assertions are made as to the efficacy of the sacraments, the blessings of Church communion, the state of the departed, and other important articles of Christian hope and belief, whether it be in the form of public prayer, homilies, articles, apologies, or catechisms, it is presumed that all who unite in the use of her forms of worship, and are not, by open and

known delinquency, worthy of excommunication, are really such as we hope and pray they should be." There is clearly a very wide distinction between the expression of a general hope and a determination as to each individual case. Without the former, no public forms can be drawn up; but we cannot hazard the latter, without wholly mistaking the character of the Christian covenant. The Church of England, in her office of infant baptism, certainly presumes on the regeneration of every baptized child; but she does the same, in the office for those of riper years, respecting every adult who is baptized. In the latter case, however, it is clearly a charitable presumption; and the exact parallelism of the two forms furnishes good ground for supposing that it is the same in the former. If regeneration is to be considered as always accompanying the rite of baptism, we should be brought to the dilemma of admitting, that an insincere adult, who, though he professes, yet does not possess, the requisites of faith and repentance, must nevertheless be regenerated without either, contrary to the express doctrine of Scripture and of the Church."

These remarks form a strange compound of misrepresentation and false reasoning. In the first place, baptism and regeneration are never considered as strictly synonymous, but only so inasmuch as they are synchronous; and they both together constitute the Christian initiatory sacrament usually called (since the name of a thing consisting of parts is often taken from one part) "baptism," though sometimes, and quite as properly, also called (by the ancients especially) "regeneration." But as undue advantage is sometimes taken from the above use of the word synonymous, it would be better to leave off so using this word, and adopt instead the more correct word synchronous. Mr. Richmond, then, denies that baptism and regeneration are always synchronous, and he attempts to prove that the Church of England, in her office of infant baptism, only charitably presumes

on the regeneration of every baptized child. His reasoning, however, is altogether fallacious. For what is it, let me ask, that our Church charitably presumes on in the case of an adult coming to baptism? Is it his regeneration? No; but his being free from the guilt of insincerity, which she considers the sole obstacle in the way of his regeneration. But how different is the case of an infant! Here no insincerity can exist; and, therefore, the Church's language with respect to the child's regeneration is not that of charity merely, but that of certainty. Nothing, indeed, can be plainer than the language of our baptismal service—

“There (observes Archbishop Laurence, whose celebrated “Bampton Lectures” all our self-styled Evangelical clergymen would do well to read and digest) we are directly taught the benignity of our gracious Creator towards us all, without distinction; his election of us as Christians; and his subsequent rejection only of those who, polluted by vice, divest themselves of that sacred character. So strikingly prominent, indeed, are these sentiments in the office alluded to, that in order not to perceive them, or to deny their existence, we must shut our eyes against the obvious construction of the English language. It expressly asserts, that the good-will of our heavenly Father is equal towards all who are brought to his holy baptism; that he favourably receives them and embraces them with the arms of his mercy, gives unto them the blessing of eternal life, and makes them partakers of his everlasting kingdom. But, lest even this should be deemed equivocal, or, at least, not sufficiently declarative of the object in view, the baptized are further said not only to be regenerated with his Holy Spirit, and made his own children by adoption, but, still more explicitly, to be admitted ‘into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.’ Was it possible for words more precise, distinct, and expressive, to be adopted? And yet there are writers who contend that all infants are not supposed to be thus regenerated,

and numbered among the elect of God, but only a fortunate few irrespectively chosen ; regeneration not always taking place in point of fact, but only in the judgment of charity ; and that the words, upon which so much stress is laid, are only general expressions adapted to general forms. But those who advance this argument in opposition to the plain import of the terms in contemplation, forget a passage, apparently decisive of the question, subjoined in the rubric, which declares it to be certain, that children dying before they commit actual sin are undoubtedly saved ; a declaration which would be useless and absurd, if it could be so interpreted as to mean those alone who are included in an absolute, and to us inscrutable, decree of predestination."

It is not so easy to say what *were*, as what *were not*, Mr. Richmond's views with regard to regeneration ; though we can hardly believe that he could, while professing to belong to our Church, separate it from all connection with the rite of baptism. It seems not unlikely that he belonged to those who are of opinion that there exists a distinction between baptismal and spiritual regeneration.

"But this opinion (as Bishop Van Mildert observes) either invalidates or misrepresents the true sacramental character of baptism. For, if spiritual do not accompany baptismal regeneration, in what proper sense can the latter be called regeneration ? It is only the spiritual change it produces which can entitle it to that appellation ; and, divested of such spiritual effect, it is reduced to a lifeless and unavailing ceremony. If it be not the means and the pledge of receiving that spiritual benefit, of which it is acknowledged to be a sign and a token, what is its inherent value as a sacramental ordinance ? The advantage given, by such representations of it, to fanatics, and to all who decry the sacraments as beggarly elements of religion, is manifest."

Mr. Richmond and his biographer seem horrified at the thought of pronouncing regeneration to have taken

place with respect to any adult whose life has not afforded a certain visible criterion of it. But may not, I would ask, the seed be sown, and yet have its growth retarded from various causes? And shall we take upon us to deny its ever having been sown, merely because it has not yet sprung up and manifested itself quite so soon as we expected? As to the quotations adduced by Mr. Richmond from the Fathers, they may all have been intended as warnings to adults against approaching the sacraments insincerely, from a vain reliance on the mere *opus operatum*; and the quotation from Hooker is evidently of this sort, whilst it also presses (as does likewise the succeeding quotation from Latimer) upon all baptized persons the necessity of striving duly to improve the privileges they had been admitted to: these quotations, therefore, prove nothing to the purpose.

I might now notice the objections of Mr. Bickersteth, as contained in his late treatise (another of the "Family Library") on baptism; but as all his objections proceed from a confusion of terms, and would only lead to repetition, I cannot do better than at once refer such objectors to the triumphant reply of Mr. Melvill, which forms the passage before alluded to, and occurs in a sermon preached by him on Gen. i. 2:—"And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

"You will find it, we believe, to have been the general opinion of the Fathers of the Church, that the waters, of which we read in the very beginning of the Bible, were a figure of those of baptism; so that, as the world may be said to have been produced from the waters on which the Spirit first moved, the Church may be said to come forth from those sacramental waters, whose virtue is derived from that selfsame Spirit's brooding. In accordance with such opinion, we believe it to be specially in and through the sacrament of baptism that the Holy Ghost acts in renova-

ting the nature which became corrupt through apostacy. We deprecate, indeed, as much as any man, the so ascribing virtue to a sacrament, that those who have partaken of it may be led to feel sure that they need no other change, no greater moral amelioration, than has been thereby effected or procured. But, without doing this, we may attribute to baptism regenerating efficacy. We would ourselves be constantly using and pressing upon others the use of the collect of our Church for Christmas Day, in which the prayer is, 'Grant that we, being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit:' a prayer in which the supplicants undeniably represent themselves as already regenerate and adopted into God's family; but in which, nevertheless, they ask for daily renewal, and that, too, through the workings of God's Spirit. The Church here evidently distinguishes between regeneration and renewal, just as the Apostle does when he speaks of being saved by 'the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' regeneration, you observe, being closely associated with water—'the washing of regeneration'—and not confounded with that renovation which the Holy Spirit effects in true believers. If, then, the Church say, that regeneration takes place at baptism, it does not say that no renewal is needed besides this regeneration. Why, therefore, should the Church be taunted, as though she attached inordinate value to a sacrament, and taught men that, because sprinkled in infancy, they stand in need of no further change? That the Church of England does hold, and does teach, baptismal regeneration, would never, we must venture to think, have been disputed, had not men been anxious to remain in her communion, and yet to make her formularies square with their own private notions. The words put into the mouth of the officiating minister, immediately after every baptism, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is regenerate,' seem too distinct to be explained away, and too general for any of those

limitations by which some would restrict them. You may tell me that the Church speaks only in the judgment of charity, on the supposition that there has been genuine faith in those who have brought the infant to the font. But, even on this modified view, the Church holds baptismal regeneration; she holds that, if not invariably, yet under certain circumstances, infants are regenerate, only because baptized. We cannot, however, admit that the language is only the language of that charity which 'hopeth all things.' Had the Church not designed to go further than this, she might have said, 'Seeing that we may charitably believe;' or 'Seeing that we may charitably hope that this child is regenerate:' she could never have ventured on the broad, unqualified declaration, a declaration to be made whensoever the sacrament of baptism has been administered, 'Seeing that this child is regenerate;' and then have gone on to require of the congregation to express their gratitude in such words as these: 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit.' We really think that no fair, no straightforward dealing can get rid of the conclusion, that the Church holds what is called baptismal regeneration. You may dislike the doctrine; but so long as I subscribe to that Prayer-book, and so long as I officiate according to the forms of that Prayer-book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest, and yet deny that every baptized person is, on that account, regenerate. But, then, if you charge on the Church that, because she holds this, she holds that every baptized person has so undergone, that he must retain, all the moral change necessary for admission into heaven, you overlook other parts of the baptismal service which strongly rebut your accusation. No sooner has the Church pronounced the infant regenerate, than she asks the prayers of the people, that 'this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning'—evidently intimating her belief, that, though regenerate, the child may possibly not go on to

that renewal of nature which alone can secure godly living. And what are we to say of the appointment of sponsors, parties from whom the Church requires vows in the name of the child, and to whom she commits the instruction of the child, if not that the Church feels that whatever the benefits conferred by baptism, they remove not the necessity for the use of all those means by which sinners may be brought nigh to God, and upheld in a state of acceptance? The Church, then, holds that baptism regenerates; but the Church does not hold that all who are thus regenerate can never need any further moral change in order to fitness for heaven. And we freely own that we know not how, consistently with the Scripture, the Church could do otherwise than maintain, that what is called the second birth is effected at baptism. Our Lord's words are very explicit: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It can hardly be disputed that the being 'born of water' refers to baptism—any other interpretation must be so strained, that to mention would be to refute it. But if we were 'born of water' in baptism, do you mean to say that it is at some other time that we are born of the Spirit? Then there is a third birth as well as a second; and of this I do not think that we read in any part of Scripture. The water and the Spirit seem compared to two agents which meet in order to the production of a new creature. The birth spoken of is not from the water by itself, neither is it from the Spirit by itself: the simile would hardly have been drawn from a birth, had there not been agencies which might be said to combine, and which might, therefore, be likened to parents. Hence, if it be in baptism that we are 'born of water,' it must also be in baptism that we are 'born of the Spirit;' otherwise you make Christ speak of two births, when he manifestly speaks only of one; and you represent him, moreover, as using a simile which is scarcely in place, unless two agencies unite to effect a result. We believe, then, in accordance with the

doctrine of our Church—a doctrine of whose agreement with Scripture we are thoroughly persuaded—that every baptized person has entered, by virtue of his baptism, on a condition so different from his natural, become entitled to such privileges, and endowed with such grace, that he may be described as regenerate, or born again from above. He may fail to be finally advantaged by this adoption into God's visible family. He may not be trained up as a member of that family should be trained: there may be no attempt at making use of his privileges—none at acquiring or cherishing the dispositions which should characterize God's children, none at consolidating and perpetuating that membership which was decreed to him by his initiation into the Church. But this is only saying, that, having been made a child of God, he may fail at last to be an heir of the kingdom, through failing to conform himself to the known will, and to improve the offered mercies, of his Father in heaven. He may be reckoned with the sons, because he has been regenerated, and, nevertheless, be disinherited at the last, because he has never laboured after, and therefore never acquired, that thorough moral renewal, of which his regeneration was at once the pledge and the commencement."

I have thus endeavoured to lay before the reader the chief arguments both for and against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. On few subjects have more been said and written; and the reason evidently appears to be, the utter impossibility of reconciling such a doctrine with those Calvinistic tenets which some of our clergymen seem to glory in, as giving a distinguishing feature to their religious system, and for preaching which they appropriate to themselves the exclusive title of "Evangelical," thus reflecting on their more orthodox brethren who conscientiously disapprove of such tenets as dangerous and unscriptural. These tenets constitute what the holders of them are now pleased to call "modified Calvinism," in opposition to what they call "high Calvinism;" which latter term

we understand as intended to designate, not those evangelical doctrines which Calvin held in common with our Reformers, but those peculiar tenets which may be considered as originating with himself, and which derived their chief authority from his writings. The above distinction, however, we can by no means allow; feeling, as we do, convinced, that Calvinism, strictly so called, admits of no such modification as has been attempted in these days, and that "modified" and "high" Calvinism must both stand and fall together. In fact, as has been most justly remarked, "modernized Calvinism is only so far distinguishable from the ancient, as it insidiously approaches us under a softer term:" and it is for this reason chiefly, that we cannot but consider Calvin as far more candid and consistent than his modern disciples, who now seem zealous to gain proselytes to his system by jesuitically concealing that repulsive darkness and deformity with which it is accompanied. Now the tenets which peculiarly distinguish the religious system of Calvin, as they are to be found in his writings, are these following:—The absolute and unconditional election, or predestination, of certain particular individuals to eternal salvation; and the equally absolute and unconditional reprobation of all the remaining part of mankind, without respect of persons. As preparatory to this Divine act of predestination, taken in this absolute and unconditional sense, it is maintained, that God foreordained the fall of man; that, in consequence of his fall, the whole human race becoming a mass of corruption, it was decreed by God, before the foundation of the world, to choose some out of this totally depraved mass to be saved, and to leave the others to everlasting misery. This is what Calvin calls the eternal decree of God, by which the final condition of every man was determined before he was born into the world. "For all (says he) are not created under the same circumstances; but to some eternal life is preordained, to others eternal damnation. And the occasion of this difference

between the elect and reprobate, is resolved solely into the arbitrary will of God." Such are the fundamental principles on which the Calvinistic system rests. To these must be added some tenets (those which peculiarly distinguish the pseudo-evangelical creed), which appear to be inseparably connected with them, respecting the irresistibility of Divine Grace, the absolute impossibility of the elect falling totally and finally from grace, and a third, respecting God's being the sole operator in the work of man's salvation, man being only a machine or instrument in his hand ; which, together with one additional tenet, completes the horrid picture which Calvin has given of that Being whose mercy, we are told, is over all his works ; namely, *that* part of the Divine plan of redemption which consists in actually fitting and preparing the reprobate for the doom to which they have been consigned, by rendering them absolutely incapable of being profited by any means of grace whatever : so that whilst the elect (with whose election neither faith nor works have anything to do) are prepared by God for glory, by his working all in them ; so in like manner the reprobates are prepared by God for damnation, by his rendering them blind and stupid, and depriving them of the faculty of hearing his word to any possible advantage. Calvin's words, literally translated, are, " God directs his voice to them (the reprobates), but for the purpose of their being made more deaf ; he sets his light before them, but in order that they may be rendered more blind ; he holds forth doctrine to them, but that they may be rendered more stupid by it ; he applies a remedy, but for the purpose of their not being healed."

That all these really were the sentiments of Calvin, any one may satisfy himself by a reference to his writings ; and the Westminster Confession and the Lambeth Articles speak much the same language. But how different is the language of our Church, which some, nevertheless, hesitate not to pronounce Calvinis-

tic ! The fundamental position in the Calvinistic system is, that certain individuals among mankind are ordained to eternal life, others to eternal destruction, by an absolute irrespective decree of God, before the world began. But in the opening of the liturgy our Church assures her members that God "desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and that he pardoneth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." To make, therefore, the doctrine of the Church to be in this instance Calvinistic, it must be admitted that God does *not* desire an event to take place which he has at the same time absolutely decreed *shall* take place. Again, the prayer of St. Chrysostom concludes thus: "Granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." But, according to the Calvinistic system, there are but two classes of persons in the world, the elect and the reprobate; and the condition of every individual of each class has been absolutely and irreversibly determined. This prayer, consequently, in a Calvinistic point of view, is totally useless. The elect have no occasion to make use of it, and the reprobate have nothing to hope from it. The former cannot but be saved, and the latter cannot but be lost. According to Calvin's doctrine, Jesus Christ was the Redeemer only of a few chosen individuals who had been before marked out in the divine counsels. Whereas the answer which our Church teaches every one of her young members to make, in the second branch of the summary of his belief, is this: "Secondly, in God the Son, who has redeemed me and *all* mankind." In strict correspondence with which idea, in the other sacrament of our Church, Jesus Christ is declared by our Church to have made "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the *whole* world." And the following is an extract from one of the prayers appointed for Ash-Wednesday :—

"O most mighty God and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon *all* men, and hatest *nothing* that thou hast made, and who wouldest *not* the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his sin and be saved," &c. This comparison might easily, if necessary, be pursued through other parts of our beautiful and scriptural liturgy (the clear language of which ought sufficiently to explain whatever may seem doubtful in the Articles), in order to manifest how grossly our Church must be misrepresented, when Calvinism (whether ancient or modern, it matters not) is attempted to be laid to her charge. Her doctrine of Election (widely different from that of Calvin) she "has intimately blended (remarks Archbishop Laurence) with the holy ordinance for baptism, including *all* in the universal promise, and regulating the decrees of God by our assumption or rejection of the Christian character; persuaded that the contrary tenet of a predestination by individual destiny is attended with the worst of consequences; that while it furnishes the profligate sinner with a pretext for his vices, it increases the agony of the desponding, whose petitions for mercy and forgiveness seem never to reach the throne of grace, but return to his afflicted soul disregarded, if not despised; adding tenfold horror to his despair."

We are accordingly taught, in the concluding clause of our seventeenth Article, "that none except the truly pious can derive consolation from the doctrine of our election in Christ—of *ours* collectively in a religious, not of *theirs* individually in a personal, capacity; and that the opposite idea of a predestination which regards the persons of men, fixing the fate of each irrevocably, when entertained by those whose curiosity and crime exceed their piety, tends to drive them into despair, from a persuasion of their being exposed to the wrath of heaven, as the non-elect; or, from a presumption of their ultimate security, as the elect, into the most abandoned profligacy."

"I imagine (observes Dr. Hey) that the doctrine of Assurance has chiefly succeeded from an idea, that those who disclaim it refuse to the good and pious a lively spiritual satisfaction or joy in the Holy Ghost ; yet this is far from being the truth. It seems possible that they who have for a length of time lived in confirmed habits of virtue and piety, may look forward to a future life not only with comfort, but with rapture and exultation ; though, perhaps, never without some degree of diffidence or modesty. If they have been in all things willing to live honestly, they may trust they have a good conscience : if their heart condemn them not, they may have ' confidence towards God ;' they may taste the good word of God, and ' the powers of the world to come,' in such a manner as to enjoy great happiness, without ever being out of a state of probation."

To elude the difficulties of Calvinism, its advocates occasionally have recourse to the distinction (originally framed by Thomas Aquinas, and afterwards applauded by Calvin and some of his followers, though discountenanced by Bucer) of God's will into revealed and hidden ; which two wills, they tell us, are sometimes contrary, so that what clearly appears to us to be the revealed will of God, may yet be opposed to his hidden and true will. According to this monstrously absurd distinction (which teaches us to look upon the Gospel promises as no other than deceitful and illusory), the general offers of salvation to all, and means of grace, carry with them the appearances and signs of a will, that all men should be saved, and therefore by a figure are called God's will, though in reality his will is secret and hidden from us, particularly decreeing to save some and reprobate others.

"But what (asks Dr. Gloucester Ridley) avails the 'revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' if, notwithstanding what he has declared, that he will 'render to every man according to his deeds,' yet, in truth and

reality, he will have no regard at all to them? What encouragement is there in the promise of 'eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality,' if, notwithstanding such declaration, God, by his secret will, may have decreed that they should perish? What terror in the threatenings of 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon those that are contentious and obey not the truth, and upon every soul of man that doeth evil,' if, in spite of all our evil, we stand as good a chance for salvation as others do, according to the good pleasure of his will?"

Suffice it here to observe, that the above distinction has been wisely rejected by our Church, which directs us in her seventeenth Article, to follow—not the supposed *hidden* will of God, but—that which is *expressly declared* in his word.

A much admired author (the Rev. H. Blunt) has grounded the doctrine of "personal election to eternal life" upon the following texts from the gospel of St. John, xvii. 6, 9; and x. 28, 29; maintaining, that a certain definite number of mankind are personally elected to eternal salvation, while to the remainder of the human race, who are not thus arbitrarily favoured, salvation is *possible*, though not *certain*. Whether or not the elect are ever conscious of their being so, the author does not say. I cannot, however, but consider it as extremely rash to ground such a doctrine upon what seems to have been addressed to the Apostles *peculiarly*: and as to what our blessed Lord says of his sheep: "None shall pluck them out of my hand;" his meaning evidently is, that none shall do so through any defect on *his* part. But this author appears to me more bent upon reconciling differences, than anxious to lay his own precise views before the reader in a consistent and intelligible form; I shall, therefore, take no further notice of his peculiar views, not feeling certain that I thoroughly understand him. That his

view of election is not that of the majority of the party towards whom he leans, is evident from the uniform tenor of their preaching, which is always of the soothing and consolatory kind, as addressed exclusively to those of their flock whom they consider to be of the favoured elect, whose belief in the certainty of their salvation—their unconditional salvation—needs only to be strengthened and confirmed. But let the flock of such pastors ever bear in mind what their gracious and merciful God declared by his prophet : “ When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them ; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God : wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” (Ezek. xviii. 26, 27, 32). And let the pastors consider themselves as individually addressed in the following solemn words of the Almighty to this same prophet :—

“ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life ; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die ; because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous

man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned ; also thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezek. iii. 17, 21.)

Having alluded to the anxiety of Mr. Blunt to reconcile differences, I may here take occasion to observe, that much mistake seems to prevail as to the true cause of the zeal displayed by the opponents of the Calvinistic tenets ; a zeal which arises not so much from a wish to proselytize the pious and confirmed Calvinist, as from an earnest desire to guard against the further progress of opinions, the tendency of which we conscientiously believe to be most pernicious.

The "Evangelical" party in our Church thus seem to have two methods offered to them, by which they may be brought to the adoption of the views held by their more orthodox brethren. Either, like Mr. Melvill, they may satisfy themselves, and candidly acknowledge, that our Church does really hold baptism and regeneration to be contemporaneous and inseparable—in which case they must immediately abandon their favourite Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance ; or they may convince themselves that our Church is decidedly anti-Calvinistic—in which case they will become divested of their strongest prejudices against the doctrine we have been considering.

"Could they (says Dr. Nolan) but be induced to abandon the dogma of 'final perseverance,' there would be little ground of apprehension from any of the errors which they might retain, and which are associated with it in the system termed 'Evangelical.' The stronghold of 'personal election' must be then resigned, to which they will not venture to deny, however disinclined they may be to avow, their lurking attachment. Little repugnance would then remain to allow a spiritual effect to the baptism of infants, which cannot be denied without rejecting the definition, or denying the efficacy of a sacrament. These points being once conceded—the truth of which cannot be consistently

impugned by any one who has pledged himself to administer the ordinances of the Church—the long debated controversy on the nature of regeneration would be laid at rest. No doubt can be entertained by any candid mind, which follows up this induction, or admits the unquestionable truths from which it is derived, of the real source of the errors which insinuate themselves into the Church, and the dissension with which it continues to be distracted. Those who may not feel disposed to be at the pains of investigating for themselves, will find the secret sufficiently revealed in the works which the party, termed ‘Evangelical,’ continue to recommend and disseminate. They are avowedly the productions of those who, whatever may be their disposition to conceal their principles, are not merely Calvinists, but contend that such were the divines who drew up our Articles; and who upbraid such of the clergy as subscribe them in any other sense but the Calvinistic, with a dereliction of principle.”

With the dogma of “final perseverance” is generally coupled that which asserts, that to every one of the elect there is divinely imparted a certain inward assurance of his being so; and these two dogmas chiefly characterize what is termed “Evangelical preaching.” It is scarcely possible to view without indignation, much less with unconcern, the prevalence of such preaching amongst us; preaching, the manifest tendency of which is to generate and promote enthusiasm and fanaticism in one class of persons; dejection and despondency in another; laxity of conduct in a third; and presumption and superciliousness in a fourth. The well-known case of Oliver Cromwell here speaks volumes. Brought up under such teaching, he had evidently experienced what he was taught to rely upon as a Divine assurance of his being one of the elect, whose final perseverance was certain; and who can doubt but that such a persuasion emboldened him in much of his subsequent conduct? On his death-

bed, however, not being able to avoid feeling some doubt as to his future prospects, he was induced to ask his puritanical clergyman, Dr. Goodwin, whether a man could fall from grace? To which the Doctor answering in the negative: the Protector instantly resumed courage, and replied, "Then I am safe, for I am sure I was once in a state of grace." Such spiritual advisers as this man had are now spreading amongst us; and many are the instances which occur affording visible demonstration of the pernicious tendency of their doctrine. That these instances are not more frequent, is doubtless to be attributed to the Divine blessing attendant upon the sound and sober—the *truly* Evangelical—doctrine of our Orthodox Clergy.

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